

OGAWA Mariko

## Robert Koch's 74 Days in Japan



Kleine Reihe  
Herausgegeben für die Mori-Ôgai-Gedenkstätte  
der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
von Klaus Kracht

Die Kleine Reihe nimmt überwiegend Arbeiten auf, die in Lehrveranstaltungen der Mori-Ôgai-Gedenkstätte von Studenten angefertigt wurden. Sie soll Interessierten einen Einblick in die entstehenden Studienarbeiten geben und Studierenden die Möglichkeit bieten, ihre Entwürfe einer breiteren Leserschaft vorzustellen. Im Sinne des vielseitigen Übersetzers, Autors, Literaturkritikers und Arztes Mori Ôgai (1862–1922) werden Texte aller Genres veröffentlicht, die noch nicht in deutscher Fassung vorliegen. Neben Übersetzungen finden sich in dieser Reihe auch Materialien, die einen Bezug zu Ôgais Leben und Werk und zur Arbeit der Mori-Ôgai-Gedenkstätte haben.

Band 27 entstand unter Mitarbeit von  
Mary-Louise Grossman und Nicole Keusch  
Redaktion: Beate Weber

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Mori-Ôgai-Gedenkstätte, Luisenstraße 39, 10117 Berlin

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Vervielfältigung und Verarbeitung: Druckerei der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

ISSN 1435-0351

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Cover Illustration:

“Tokyo Daily Newspaper” (*Tôkyô Mainichi shinbun*), June 13, 1908

2003

Mori-Ôgai-Gedenkstätte der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

In the Kitasato Institute in Tokyo there is a small shrine. This is not unusual in Japan, but this shrine is distinguished by its dedication to a foreigner, Robert Koch. However, Koch's 74-day stay in Japan in 1908 is not as well-known as one might expect. Thomas D. Brock's biography<sup>1</sup> gives a rudimentary treatment of the visit and there have only been a few other accounts published in Japan. In this article, I will reconstruct his travels as reported in contemporary newspapers, journals, and books.

### **Koch arrives with his young wife**

A letter dated April 18, 1908, reached Kitasato Shibasaburô 北里柴三郎 from Keystone, Iowa in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> It was a reply to Kitasato's letter to Berlin dated March 10, which had been forwarded to Koch because he had already left Germany on March 30. In the letter Koch wrote that he had toured New York, Niagara Falls, and Chicago, and that he was finally staying at his brother's farm near Keystone. He explained that he would board ship for Honolulu at San Francisco on May 9, and that he would leave for Japan on the "Siberia" on June 1, after a two week-stay in Hawaii. Joyously he reported how he had been welcomed with much hospitality in New York.

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1 Thomas D. Brock, *Robert Koch: A Life in Medicine and Bacteriology*, Madison: Science Tech Publisher, 1988.

2 北里柴三郎論説集編集委員会編『北里柴三郎論説集』 *Kitasato Shibasaburô ronsetsu shû* ("Essays of Kitasato Shibasaburô"), Kitasato Institute, 1978: 1289.

Koch, a Nobel Prize winner in 1905, was a world-famous doctor and the man of the moment. In 1908, Dr. Julius Schwalbe established the Robert Koch Foundation with the purpose of eradicating tuberculosis.<sup>3</sup> Over a million Marks had already been collected, and Andrew Carnegie personally donated the equivalent of five hundred thousand Marks.

According to *The New York Times* dated April 8, 1908, Koch was welcomed on his arrival that day by the president and members of the Association of German Doctors in the U.S., representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation, and many famous people. In his replies to queries from the press, he spoke of his excitement at the prospect of visiting Japan. There was no photo in *The New York Times*, but a picture of this magnificent reception appeared in a Japanese popular journal, “The Sun” 太陽 (*Taiyô*).<sup>4</sup> A Japanese medical journal reported that a welcome party was held in New York on the eleventh where about 500 guests attended.<sup>5</sup>

On June 12, Koch reached Yokohama to meet his student Kitasato, to satisfy his own curiosity not only about Japan but about the East in general. Enthusiastic welcomes awaited him in Yokohama and at Shinbashi railway station. Among those awaiting him was Mori Ôgai, a doctor and novelist who studied bacteriology under Koch while living in Berlin in the 1880s. Another distinguished novelist, Natsume Sôseki, described the warm reception in his diary on the thirteenth: “Koch came. A lot of fireworks in Yokohama. A special steam locomotive met him. Bundles of flowers were

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3 Dr. Schwalbe was then editor of the well-known German medical journal, *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift*.

4 『太陽』 *Taiyô* (“The Sun”), vol. 14, no. 10, 1908: frontispiece.

5 「新約 [ニューヨーク] に於けるコッホ博士歓迎会」 *Shinyaku [Nyûyôku] ni okeru Kohho hakushi kangeikai* “Dr. Koch’s Welcome Party in New York”, 『中外医事新報』 *Chûgai iji shinpô* (“Medical News Domestic and International”), no. 679, 1908: 931–932; 『細菌学雑誌』 *Saikin-*

presented. Flowers strewn on the road. Arrival at the station by carriage. Arriving at Shinbashi Station. Innumerable people welcomed him.”<sup>6</sup>

On their arrival, his wife found herself in the full glare of publicity. Koch was 64 years old, she about 30 years his junior. The newspapers reported that she was a young lady of about 40. Only three months after ending the 26-year-marriage to his childhood friend Emmy in June 1893,<sup>7</sup> Koch married E. F. Hedwig Freiberg. According to an Oriental proverb, a man should not abandon the woman he married in poverty once he has become successful (糟糠の妻は堂より下さず *Sôkô no tsuma wa dô yori kudasazu*). Koch, however, divorced the wife who had seen him through years of hardship and borne him a child, and then married a second-rate actress young enough to be his daughter. The marriage was fertile ground for gossip and scandal in the medical academies,<sup>8</sup> though many ordinary people were charmed by Hedwig’s friendly manner.

In the car to Tokyo, Koch sat opposite Kitasato, Hedwig next to Nagayo Shôkichi 長与称吉. Compared with the silent Koch, Hedwig spoke easily and frankly, a trait which would cause some trouble later. Hedwig confessed to Nagayo that she had wanted to visit Japan for a long time, hoping to satisfy her curiosity about a specific topic:<sup>9</sup> She had been greatly impressed by the Japanese mentality, especially since the Russo-Japanese

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*gaku zasshi* (“Journal of Bacteriology”), no. 150, 1908: 52; Lawrason Brown, “Robert Koch (1843–1910), an American Tribute,” *Annals of Medical History*, n.s., vol. 7, 1935: 390.

6 『漱石全集』 *Sôseki zenshû* (“The Complete Works of Natsume Sôseki”), vol. 13, 1975: 330.

7 Lawrason Brown, “Robert Koch,” *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, vol. 8, 1932: 575–576. “Koch, Robert,” *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, New York, vol. 7, 1981: 420–435.

8 Élie Metchnikoff 『近代医学の建設者』 *Kindai igaku no kensetsusha* (Original title: *Trois fondateurs de la médecine moderne, Pasteur–Lister–Koch*), Tokyo, 1933: 122–123; Miyamoto Shinobu 宮本忍 『ローベルト・コッホ』 *Rôberuto Kohho* (“Robert Koch”), Shinkyôiku Jigyô Kyôkai, 1950. Hedwig seems to have had two occupations, one as a painter, the other as an actress. Charlotte Thomas, *Robert Koch: Roman eines Arztes*, Berlin, 1968. Thomas depicts Hedwig as a painter.

9 『東京毎日新聞』 *Tôkyô Mainichi shinbun* (“Tokyo Mainichi Newspaper”), June 13, 1908.

War. The fact that the Japanese were willing to dedicate not only absolute respect, but also their lives to the Emperor had shocked her. She told Nagayo that she had asked Koch to go to Japan because she wanted to observe what made Japanese capable of such sacrifice. For Hedwig, no people had a more mysterious mind. Before her visit she had read as many books about Japan as possible. It certainly seems that Hedwig's interest was not mere flattery, as she subsequently visited Japan twice (1912 and 1914), even after Koch's death.

### **Reception after Reception**

Beginning with a short stay at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, the couple toured Japan for over 70 days until August 24.<sup>10</sup> Koch's itinerary had been to take in sights from Sendai in the north to Nagasaki in the south until September, and to travel to China afterwards. However, a telegram from Germany requesting that he attend the International Conference of Tuberculosis in Washington in September cut his journey short.<sup>11</sup>

On June 14, a private reception hosted by Kitasato was held at the Nobles' Hall 華族会館 (*Kazoku Kaikan*) in Tokyo to introduce Koch to some local celebrities. One hundred and eight people gathered for that occasion. A public reception was held at the music school in Ueno Park on the sixteenth. This program was organized by 34 medical associations in coopera-

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10 The famous biography of Koch by Hellmuth Unger and several old Japanese books report that Koch's stay lasted about forty days. I have traced the cause of this error to Miyajima's paper. Miyajima Mikinosuke, "Robert Koch in Japan," *Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift*, vol. 58, 1932: 510. In spite of travelling with Koch in Japan, Miyajima wrote that "Koch hielt sich mehr als 40 Tage in Japan auf". Hellmuth Unger, *Robert Koch: Roman eines großen Lebens*, Berlin, 1936, was translated into Japanese by Miyajima and Ishikawa and thereafter they published an enlarged edition in 1943, adding a supplement on Japan.

11 『大阪朝日新聞』 *Ôsaka Asahi shinbun* ("Osaka Asahi Newspaper"), August 22, 1908.

tion with others. Over 1,400 people attended in an atmosphere of great festivity.<sup>12</sup> The numerous guests included ministers, dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, barons, professors, heads of hospitals, and other distinguished people. A fellow German, Dr. Erwin von Bälz, was also present; he happened to be in Japan at the request of the Japanese Home Office.<sup>13</sup> At that party, two different souvenir picture cards were distributed and a commemorative postmark was prepared. On one picture card was Koch's portrait, the other showed the Institute for Infectious Diseases



Fig. 1: Pin for Koch's reception at Nobles' Hall

(today, the Robert Koch Institute).<sup>14</sup> In addition, a pin with a cloisonné head was made in commemoration of the visit. The design showed Koch's face surrounded by chrysanthemum petals.

First, Baron Ishiguro Tadanori 石黒忠憲 gave the opening speech introducing Koch, then Miura Kinnosuke 三浦謹之助 gave a welcoming address. Minister of Education Makino Nobuaki 牧野伸顯 proposed a toast to Koch's health, and the German ambassador responded. After a welcome message from the Minister of the Home Office Hara Takashi 原敬 had been read, Koch gave a lecture on sleeping sickness.<sup>15</sup> Hedwig had repeatedly

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- 12 Special issue 「ローベルト・コッホ氏歓迎記念号」 *Rôberuto Kohho shi kangei kinen gô* ("Robert Koch Commemorative Issue"), 『細菌学雑誌』 *Saikingaku zasshi* ("Journal of Bacteriology"), 1908. This contains the text of Koch's lecture on sleeping sickness, together with a list of those who attended, including Ishikawa Chiyomatsu and Oka Asajirô.
  - 13 『東京朝日新聞』 *Tôkyô Asahi shinbun* ("Tokyo Asahi Newspaper"), August 22, 1908; 『中外医事新報』 *Chûgai iji shinpô* ("Medical News Domestic and International"), vol. 679, 1908: 927.
  - 14 『東京医事新誌』 *Tôkyô Iji shinshi* ("Tokyo New Medical Journal"), no. 1568, 1908: 1202 (30).
  - 15 On the process of determining the title for his lecture, see Miyajima and Ishikawa, enlarged edition (note 10), 1943: 310–311.



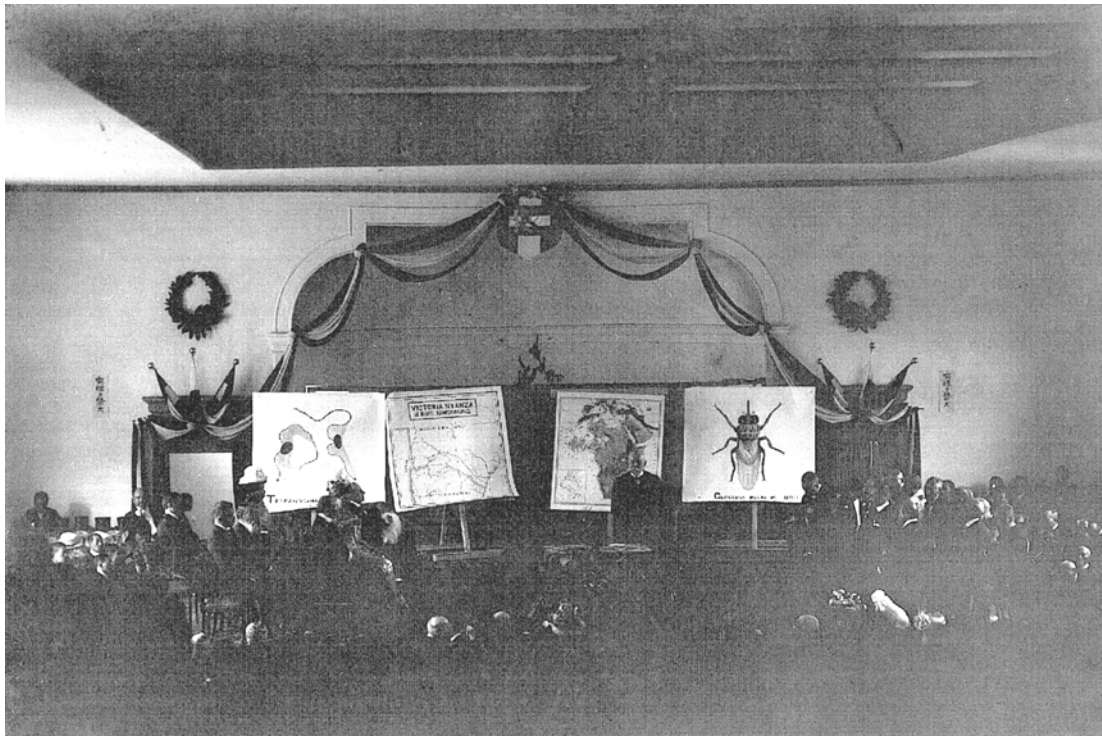


Fig. 2: Koch's lecture at Nobles' Hall

advised Koch to choose a topic more urgent for the Japanese than sleeping sickness, which was not found in Japan. She had also tried to get Kitasato's assent to this opinion. However, Koch's resolution was firm, and wall charts were already prepared according to his directions.

After this grand reception, entertainment was offered at the Kabuki Theatre in Tokyo. The program included the well-known plays, "Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees" 義経千本桜 (*Yoshitsune senbon zakura*), "The Saga Brothers' Revenge" 夜討曾我 (*Youchi Soga*), "Two People at Dôjôji" 二人道成寺 (*Ninin dôjôji*), and a Japanese dance "Flowers of the Country" 国の華 (*Kuni no hana*).<sup>16</sup> Between the very popular performances and at intermissions the Toyama Army School brass band played famous German music. The gist of the plots were translated into German

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16 『演芸画報』 *Engei gahô* ("Theatre Pictorial"), second series, vol. 7, July 1908: 148.

by Mori Ôgai, published in a glossy brochure and presented to those attending.<sup>17</sup> Mori and Nagayo sat on each side of Koch and his wife and served as interpreters.

On June 17, Koch visited Kitasato's Institute for Infectious Diseases 伝染病研究所 (*Densenbyô Kenkyûsho*) and was highly satisfied with its success. Another reception was hosted by the University of Tokyo at Koishikawa Botanical Garden 小石川植物園 (*Koishikawa Shokubutsuen*) on the nineteenth, and on both the seventeenth and nineteenth, evening parties were held at the German Embassy. On the twenty-second, three doctors, Mori, Kitasato, and Aoyama Tanemichi 青山胤道, called on Koch at the

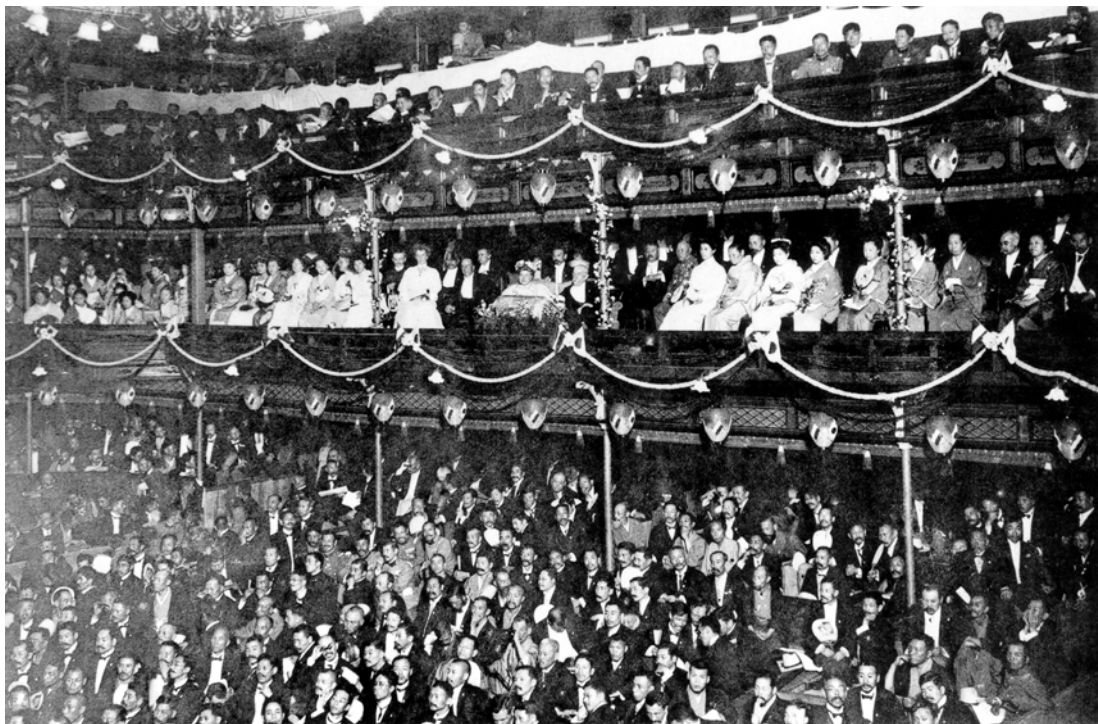


Fig. 3: The Kabuki Theatre

17 “Festspiele” 『鶇外全集』 *Ôgai zenshû* (“The Complete Works of Mori Ôgai”), vol. 26, Iwanami Shoten, 1973: 32 (591)–35 (588). Ôgai recorded in his diary how he had designed the brochure. A big bell and cherry blossom on the upper right corner and a lady named Shizukagozen on the lower left corner, symbolizing Dôjôji and Yoshitsune senbon zakura respectively, were drawn on the front page of the brochure.

Imperial Hotel to ask his advice about beriberi which at that time was considered to be an infectious disease.<sup>18</sup> Ôgai wrote as follows: “Dr. Koch recommends us to dispatch a commission to Batavia (the old name for the Dutch territory of Djakarta) in order to research beriberi. He suggests beriberi is an infectious disease, however, a beriberi germ has not been found yet. Some Japanese believe that the cause of beriberi is a kind of poisoning [...]. According to Koch’s advice we are going to dispatch researchers to Batavia where there are serious cases of beriberi. We hope they will be successful!”<sup>19</sup>

On June 25, Koch was granted an audience at Court.<sup>20</sup> The following day he enjoyed seeing Sumo wrestling at the Nihonbashi Club 日本橋倶楽部 (*Nihonbashi Kurabu*).<sup>21</sup> In addition to this busy schedule, he accepted many invitations, while more sightseeing filled the few remaining spaces in his itinerary. On the twenty-seventh, he and his wife went to Nikkô where they were welcomed by the Doctors’ Association of Tochigi prefecture. They stayed at the Nikkô Kanaya Hotel 日光金谷ホテル (*Nikkô Kanaya Hoteru*), paid their respects at Tôshôgû Shrine, and read their fortunes.<sup>22</sup> However, Hedwig disliked the weather there, so they changed their schedule, went

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18 「脚気病に対する研究方針」 *Kakkebyô ni tai suru kenkyû hôshin* (“Research Guide to Beriberi”), 『大日本私立衛生会雑誌』 *Dai Nippon Shiritsu Eiseikai zasshi* (“Government and Non-Government Cooperative Journal of Sanitation”), vol. 304, 1908: 409–410; 「我国脚気病研究方針に就いて」 *Waga kuni kakkebyô kenkyû hôshin ni tsuite* (“On the Japanese Research Guide to Beriberi”), 『科学世界』 *Kagaku sekai* (“Science world”), vol. 1, no. 12, 1908: 976–977; 「脚気病研究に関する意見」 *Kakkebyô kenkyû ni kan suru iken* (“Opinions Concerning the Research on Beriberi”), 『広島衛生医事月報』 *Hiroshima Eisei iji geppô* (“Monthly Journal of Hygiene in Hiroshima”), vol. 117, 1908: 234–236.

19 『鷗外全集』 *Ôgai zenshû* (“The Complete Works of Mori Ôgai”), vol. 35, 1975: 407–409.

20 『中外医事新報』 *Chûgai iji shinpô* (“Medical News Domestic and International”), vol. 679, 1908: 927; vol. 680, 1908: 1003–1004. The Emperor gave him a large silver bowl embossed with the Imperial crest. This is the first case of such an honour being awarded to a foreigner.

21 「コッホ博士の相撲見物」 *Kohho hakushi no sumô kenbutsu* (“Dr. Koch Enjoying Sumo”), 『東京朝日新聞』 *Tôkyô Asahi shinbun* (“Tokyo Asahi Newspaper”), June 27, 1908.

back to Tokyo and moved on to Kamakura. There, they stayed at the Kaihin'in Hotel 海濱院ホテル (*Kaihin'in Hoteru*) where they were most pleased with the splendid view of Mount Fuji. Every day Koch got into a small boat and enjoyed fishing as if this had been his real vocation. During their stay in Kamakura, a young Japanese woman named Muraki Hana 村木ハナ, who would later follow them to Berlin, served them devotedly. They stayed until the end of July when Koch was forced to change his plans because of the aforementioned conference in Washington. In commemoration of Koch's visit, a stone was erected in 1911, a year and a half after his death. It can be visited today at Inamuragasaki in Kamakura.<sup>23</sup>

### Trip to Western Japan

The Kochs left Kamakura on July 27, moved to the famous hot-spring resort of Hakone, and stayed at the Fujiya Hotel 富士屋ホテル (*Fujiya Hoteru*) for two days before moving on to Nagoya.<sup>24</sup> On the way, receptions were held on the platform as they arrived at the stations of Numazu, Shizuoka, and Hamamatsu, and they received a number of gifts. As soon as they arrived at Nagoya around 4 o'clock, they went with Drs. Kitasato and Shiga to a reception held in the prefectural diet building. At 8:30 in the evening, they enjoyed seeing traditional dance, Nagoya Odori 名古屋踊り,

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22 「コッホ博士の御籤」 *Kohho hakushi no mikuji* ("Dr. Koch's Fortune"), 『東京朝日新聞』 *Tôkyô Asahi shinbun* ("Tokyo Asahi Newspaper"), June 29, 1908.

23 A stone with an explanation of Koch's visit inscribed on the upper part in German and the lower part in classical Chinese, was erected in memoriam. In 1983, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Koch's discovery of tuberculosis germ, the stone was moved to Kaihin Park of Inamuragasaki from Mount Ryôzen by order of the Doctors' Association of Kamakura.

24 On Koch's behaviour, and the various gifts and souvenirs, see 「コッホ氏来遊彙報」 *Kohho shi raiyû ihô* ("Collected Reports on Dr. Koch's Trip to Japan"), 『細菌学雑誌』 *Saikingaku zasshi* ("Journal of Bacteriology"), no. 154, 1908: 49–60.

at the Misono Theatre 御園座 (*Misono Za*).<sup>25</sup> All the members of the Nagoya Doctors' Association turned out in frock coats or black formal kimonos, although the day was so hot that even ice columns erected in the hall were unable to cool it down.

The next day, the Kochs had a busy schedule. Among other things they paid visits to the then Imperial Villa 名古屋離宮 (*Nagoya Rikyû*) and the hospital Kôseikan 好生館<sup>26</sup> in the morning. The *Gifu Mainichi News* published Koch's remarks when he visited the Imperial Villa in Nagoya which was then located within the grounds of the castle.

He was surprised by the golden dolphins on the roof of the main donjon of Nagoya Castle. It was wasteful for the Nation's economy to expose dolphins made of real gold to the sun everyday [he thought]. They had better melt them down and build a warship. If they wanted to add a nice view to the castle, they should find other ways. His admiration for Japan as an artistic country was no wonder, given that artists used such amounts of gold just for display and left them exposed to sunshine and rain with perfect composure. Moreover, he admired an elegant Japanese picture of tigers on a sliding panel painted by some members of the famous Kanô family 狩野派, but pointed out that this picture regrettably was not drawn from life, as the pattern of the tigers' skin had no sharp contrasts and their ears were too small for their bodies. As a whole, these pictures lacked the real characteristics of fierce beasts. He inferred that these pictures had been based on ti-

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25 Tôno, Yoshio, *The Seventy-year History of the Misono Theater*, Nagoya, 1966: 66. Also see 『朝日新聞』 *Asahi shinbun* ("Asahi Newspaper"), February 2, 1985. 「舞踊会鳥目観」 *Buyô kai torime kan* ("A Bird's-eye View of Dance"), 『名古屋新聞』 *Nagoya shinbun* ("Nagoya Newspaper"), August 1 & 2, 1908. Special Advertisement, *Fusô Newspaper*, July 29, 1908 & 「コ博士の研究と事績」 *Ko hakushi no kenkyû to jiseki* ("Dr. Koch's Research and its Fruits"), 5 series article, 『扶桑新聞』 *Fusô shinbun* ("Fusô Newspaper"), July 31 and August 1-4, 1908. 「コ博士夫人と名古屋舞踊」 *Ko hakushi fujin to Nagoya buyô* ("Mrs. Koch and Nagoya Odori"), 『大阪朝日新聞』 *Ôsaka Asahi shinbun* ("Osaka Asahi Newspaper"), August 2, 1908.

26 The Kôseikan was one of the leading hospitals in Japan. The commemorating picture of Koch was in the "Journal of Medical Research in the Kôseikan Hospital" 『好生館医事研究雑誌』 *Kôseikan iji kenkyû zasshi* ("Kôseikan Medical Research Journal"), vol. 15, no. 5 1908. Later Carl Fränkel also visited there. See also 『朝日新聞』 *Asahi shinbun* ("Asahi Newspaper"), January 12, 1985.

gers' pelts used as models. Ears on tiger pelts gradually shrank and became smaller than those of living tigers. Professor Koch's observations were acute.<sup>27</sup>

On August 2, in the same newspaper, the article "Miscellaneous on the Reception of Koch" commented with evident sarcasm on the people who had prepared his reception.

One of the organizers of the reception for Koch said that he had invited Drs. Aoyama and Satô of Tokyo Medical College, however both had declined. Both doctors belonged to a rival group to Kitasato's, so it was clear from the beginning that they would refuse the invitation. However, the organizer could not comprehend this fact. Correct diagnosis is important for a doctor, but he seems to have been innocent in this case.<sup>28</sup>

It may be that people in Gifu city had invited Aoyama because he was a native son. However, Aoyama and Kitasato were scholastic rivals, and Kitasato had never been offered a position at the University of Tokyo. Eventually, Fukuzawa Yukichi raised the funds to found the Institute for Infectious Diseases at Shiba Park, and appointed Kitasato as director. The relationship between Kitasato and Aoyama seems to have been complicated.<sup>29</sup>

The University of Tokyo organized a welcome party but despite his long stay of 74 days the welcome seemed less than enthusiastic. Major academic journals, such as "The Eastern Academic Journal" 東洋学芸雑誌 (*Tôyô gakugei zasshi*), barely reported about Koch's visit. He was a private guest of Kitasato, whom the Japanese medical establishmen regarded as a maverick. However, wherever Koch went, commemorative goods and photographs

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27 『岐阜毎日新聞』 *Gifu Mainichi shinbun* ("Gifu Mainichi Newspaper"), August 5, 1908.

28 『岐阜毎日新聞』 *Gifu Mainichi shinbun* ("Gifu Mainichi Newspaper"), August 2, 1908.

29 Murakami Yôichirô 村上陽一郎 『ペスト大流行』 *Pesuto dairyûkô* ("Plague Epidemic"), Iwanami Shoten, 1983: 1–5.

were conspicuous as the general populace welcomed him. He was introduced publicly as the discoverer of the tuberculosis bacillus and as a benefactor of mankind, and his field was connected so deeply with everyday lives that he was well-known to ordinary people. Still it is surprising that popular interest was more in evidence than further scholastic exchanges. Acutally they were fewer than when Albert Einstein came to Japan in 1922, with a much more abstruse theory. Much would change in Japanese academia between 1908 and 1923.<sup>30</sup>

The evening of July 31, the Kochs were invited to Gifu. At the station, Governor Suzuki, Mayor Hattori, and some members of the Gifu Doctors' Association came to see Koch. They went to a Japanese hotel, the Ban-shôkan 萬松館 in Gifu Park, to attend another reception. After their pictures had been taken, Hedwig felt tired and stayed in the hotel by herself while Koch went out to see the cormorant fishing on the Nagara River. They returned to Nagoya on a train departing at 23:15 and arrived after midnight.

The next morning, they left for the shrine at Ise on the 9:05 train. The schedule was very demanding. Their visit seems to have been planned by Dr. Eguchi, president of the Yamada Red Cross Hospital 山田赤十字病院 (*Yamada Sekijûji Byôin*). On the way, their train made brief stops at Tsu and Matsuzaka Stations where a number of doctors gathered to welcome Koch. Upon his arrival at Ise, he met Mayor Eguchi and other celebrities. Every house in the city flew the national flag as a token of respect.<sup>31</sup>

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30 Kaneko Tsutomu 金子務 『アインシュタイン・ショック』 *Ainshutain shokku* ("Einstein Shock"), Kawade Shobô Shinsha, 1981.

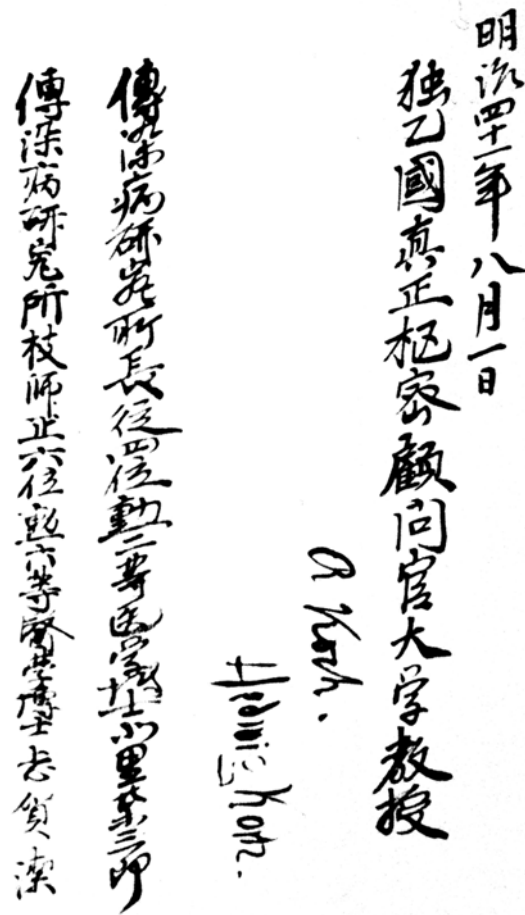
31 「コ博士の伊勢参宮」 *Ko hakushi no Ise sangû* ("Dr. Koch's Visit to the Ise Shrine"), 『大阪朝日新聞』 *Ôsaka Asahi shinbun* ("Osaka Asahi Newspaper"), August 4, 1908; Niinomi Fujiaki 新実藤昭 「伊勢におけるコッホ博士」 *Ise ni okeru Kohho hakushi* ("Prof. Koch in Ise Province"), 『三重医学』 *Mie igaku* ("Medical Journal of Mie University"), vol. 28, no. 4, 1985: 423–425.



Fig. 4: At Ise



After having a rest in the Gonikai Hotel 五二会ホテル (*Gonikai Hoteru*), they changed into formal clothes for their visit to the Ise Shrine. Koch wore a frock coat and silk hat while Hedwig was in a formal dress. As they went to the outer shrine before proceeding to the inner one, they were moved by the pure and solemn atmosphere, and Koch, Hedwig, Kitasato, and Shiga signed their names in the pilgrimage notebook. Until the following night they stayed at the Gonikai Hotel.



明治三十二年八月一日  
 独乙國真正枢密顧問官大学教授  
 Koch.  
 Hedwig Koch.  
 傳染病研究所長 後任勲三等西宮公使  
 傳染病研究所技師正六位西宮公使 去貧潔

Fig. 5: The signatures of the Kochs

The next morning they visited Futaminoura by train. On the way, they visited Okitama Shrine where Hedwig threw coins, clapped her hands and bowed three times as tradition prescribed. She also consulted a written oracle. She was extremely pleased with the place and its scenery. In spite of it being a very hot day, over 200 doctors gathered to welcome Koch at Futaminoura. The nearby seashore was filled with people anxious to get a glimpse of the great scholar. A welcoming ceremony was followed by numerous attractions and demonstrations, among which Koch was most pleased with the swordsmanship.

The following morning (August 3) they took the 7:35 train to Nara, where they received a rapturous welcome.<sup>32</sup> Their pictures were taken with members of the Doctors' Association of Nara in the front garden of the Prefectural Hall. They visited Hôryûji, a monastery temple which is the world's oldest wooden building (now designated a UNESCO world heritage site), and Yakushiji, a temple dedicated to the Buddha Yakushi (the Buddha of healing). It is not clear whether they visited anything else. The temple diary records their arrival in the early morning of the fourth. Koch noted that Yakushi Nyorai, the temple's main bronze image, was holding a medicine bottle and took the opportunity to explain the importance of medical skills. An interview taken that day appeared on the sixth in the *Ôsaka Asahi Newspaper* as "Koch's Talk." The newspaper also reported the harmonious atmosphere of Koch's party at Yakushiji.

Here, people of his party said that the main image of Yakushi and the many small Buddhas on its aureole represented Koch and the many doctors all over the world who looked up to him. When Koch asked them what they meant, everyone there laughed. Someone explained that Koch must be a living Buddha of healing instructing doctors all over the world. Koch was greatly amused by this conversation.<sup>33</sup>

After sightseeing in Nara, the couple moved to Kyoto the evening of the fourth.

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32 Doctors' Association of Nara, ed. 奈良県医師会編, *History of Doctors' Association of Nara*, Nara, 1982. There is a picture in commemoration of Koch on the frontispiece of the first volume.

33 『大阪朝日新聞』 *Ôsaka Asahi shinbun* ("Osaka Asashi Newspaper"), August 6, 1908.

## Enter Fränkel, Exit Shiga

In Kyoto, they stayed one night at the Kyoto Hotel 京都ホテル (*Kyôto Hôteru*), but the next day their schedule had to be cancelled. They moved to the Miyako Hotel 都ホテル (*Miyako Hôteru*) which was more quietly located because on their arrival, Koch had become ill with gastroenteritis. He suffered from diarrhoea and vomiting, probably caused by fatigue from his demanding schedule.<sup>34</sup> However, his curiosity finally overcame his sickness. On the sixth, they went to see some temples in the Higashiyama district in spite of his convalescence and the heavy rain caused by an approaching typhoon. They visited Chion'in, the head temple of the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism, and were amused by the nightingale floors, which were designed to chirp like a bird when people walked on them.<sup>35</sup> Afterwards they saw Kôdaiji and Kiyomizu Temple. In the evening they attended a welcome party and enjoyed themselves until almost midnight.

On August 7, they visited Nijô Rikyû Imperial Villa, the old Imperial Palace, and a factory of Nishijin textiles, famous for its kimono sashes where they asked the weavers many questions. In the afternoon they saw a museum of Japanese arts and pottery. On the eighth they enjoyed traditional comedy 狂言 (*kyôgen*) in West Honganji Temple in the morning and in East Honganji Temple in the afternoon. Koch's penetrating questions based on his sophisticated understanding of Japanese culture surprised people everywhere. For the next days, they enjoyed various receptions, navigated a

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34 『京都日の出新聞』 *Kyôto Hinode shinbun* ("Kyoto Hinode Newspaper"), August 6, 1908. The descriptions of his stay in Kyoto mainly depend on "Kyoto Hinode Newspaper", August 4–13, 1908.

35 They are a kind of alarm device made in order to notice when a stranger makes a forcible entry into the building at night.

stretch of the Hozu River gorge by boat, and toured Biwa Lake, the largest lake in Japan. On August 11, Carl Fränkel, Koch's assistant from Berlin, arrived by ship at Tsuruga Port via Siberia and soon called on Koch in Kyoto. He joined the trip to western Japan.

On the morning of August 12, they moved to Osaka where they stopped briefly for a reception, and then went on to Kobe. They were invited to a luncheon in honour of Koch held at the Tor Hotel トアホテル (*Tor Hosteru*), which had been built as a cooperative investment by an American, an Englishman, a German, and a Frenchman, and had just opened the previous month. The Doctors' Association of Kobe presented the couple with kimono outfits.<sup>36</sup> Hedwig had already received one in Nagoya. Here in Kobe, Dr. Shiga who had become world-famous for his discovery of the dysentery bacterium in 1897 suddenly cancelled further involvement in Koch's itinerary, and returned to Tokyo. He had accompanied the couple with Kitasato and Miyajima from the beginning. However, he later wrote about his unhappiness during the trip.

From the beginning, I could not be pleased with Koch's wife, Hedwig. She seemed to me to be too proud and a vain woman. In particular, I felt that she was rude at the Kabuki Theatre. It was a very strange and appalling sight to see Dr. Koch currying favour with the corpulent Hedwig in the front guest balcony. As Dr. Koch is my teacher's teacher [Kitasato had been Shiga's teacher], I was ready and willing to do everything for him. However, I was disgusted when his wife bossed me about even with her private affairs. During the trip in their company, a loathing for her gradually consumed my heart. In Nara, a firework display welcoming Koch was held late at night. Hedwig got

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36 『細菌学雑誌』 *Saikingaku zasshi* ("Journal of Bacteriology"), no. 154, 1908: 57. Koch seemed to be extremely pleased with the kimonos because he expressed supreme gratitude in his address in reply. It was Dr. Kitagawa, director of Kôseikan who had given Hedwig a kimono outfit in Nagoya. Koch and Hedwig wore kimonos for their farewell party.

angry and complained to us of it having prevented her from sleeping. In Kyoto we invited only Koch to a Japanese-style restaurant and entertained him with Geisha girls.<sup>37</sup> When Hedwig heard of this, she complained bitterly to us. My patience wore out at last in Osaka. I entreated Dr. Miyajima to look after them thereafter and returned to Tokyo by myself.<sup>38</sup>

It is little wonder that Shiga got annoyed with Hedwig. According to Japanese custom at that time, the wife of a great scholar should have acted with modesty and self-effacement. However, it is noteworthy that Koch respected Hedwig's feelings and treated her with conventional European courtesy. Shiga complained that she had occupied the place of honour in the guests' seats at the Kabuki Theatre. Yet Koch would have felt duty-bound to offer the seat to his wife. In any case, which one of the two was more genuinely interested in those plays? Koch might not have minded and Hedwig's interest was not shallow. She had her own reasons for visiting Japan, and sometimes gave Koch pertinent advice. By Japanese standards, she must have seemed shockingly outspoken. The Japanese staff meekly submitted to her requests and were reluctant to refuse her. In fact, it might have been better had they responded to her with equal frankness.

In the evening Koch, his wife, Fränkel, Kitasato, and Miyajima boarded the "Momiji Maru" 紅葉丸 at Meriken Wharf in Kobe to go to Miyajima Island in Hiroshima Bay. They stayed at Takamatsu for one night, and stopped briefly at Onomichi. At both places they received an enthusiastic welcome. Around noon on August 14, they arrived at Miyajima, famous for the Itsukushima Shrine with its vermilion gateway emerging from the sea.

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37 Professional and highly sophisticated female entertainers who provide singing, dancing, and conversation.

38 Takahashi Isao 高橋功『志賀潔』("Shiga Kiyoshi"), Hôsei University Press, 1957: 165–166.

The shrine was well-known as one of the three most scenic sights in Japan. Koch enjoyed touring the small islands and fishing all day. On August 19, they moved to Hiroshima and boarded a train bound for Tokyo. The same day Dr. Fränkel, who had left Miyajima a few days earlier, tried to climb Mount Fuji.

A beautiful brush-written letter has been preserved in the Robert Koch Institute. Koch may have brought it back from Japan. It is from Dr. Yamazaki, then president of a local medical association in Hiroshima. While being rather wordy and formal, the letter is very polite and full of admiration. It chiefly explains a newly developed Japanese sweet made from the white of eggs. Yamazaki dedicated this sweet to Koch and explained how it was highly nutritious. He was proud that this brand new local product had won a prize in a nationwide sweet contest. Unfortunately, his recommendation may not have been too realistic as this sweet would quickly have gone off in Hiroshima's hot summer weather. But the letter's artless naivety seems to be typical of the spirit in which Koch was received in Japan.<sup>39</sup>

On August 20, they stayed at the Oriental Palace Hotel オリエントアルパレスホテル (*Orientalu Paresu Hoteru*) in Yokohama. Two days later back in Tokyo, they visited Kitasato's house to say goodbye. At the Maruki photo studio 丸木写真館 (*Maruki Shashinkan*), a picture of them in kimono was taken, and they attended a farewell party sponsored by Kitasato's father-in-law, head of the Bank of Japan, the central bank authorised to print money. After dinner, they enjoyed a Nô play, "The Feather Robe" 羽衣 (*Hagoromo*)<sup>40</sup>.

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39 Document in Koch's Institute in Berlin.

40 『東京毎日新聞』 *Tôkyô Mainichi shinbun* ("Tokyo Mainichi Newspaper"), August 25, 1908.

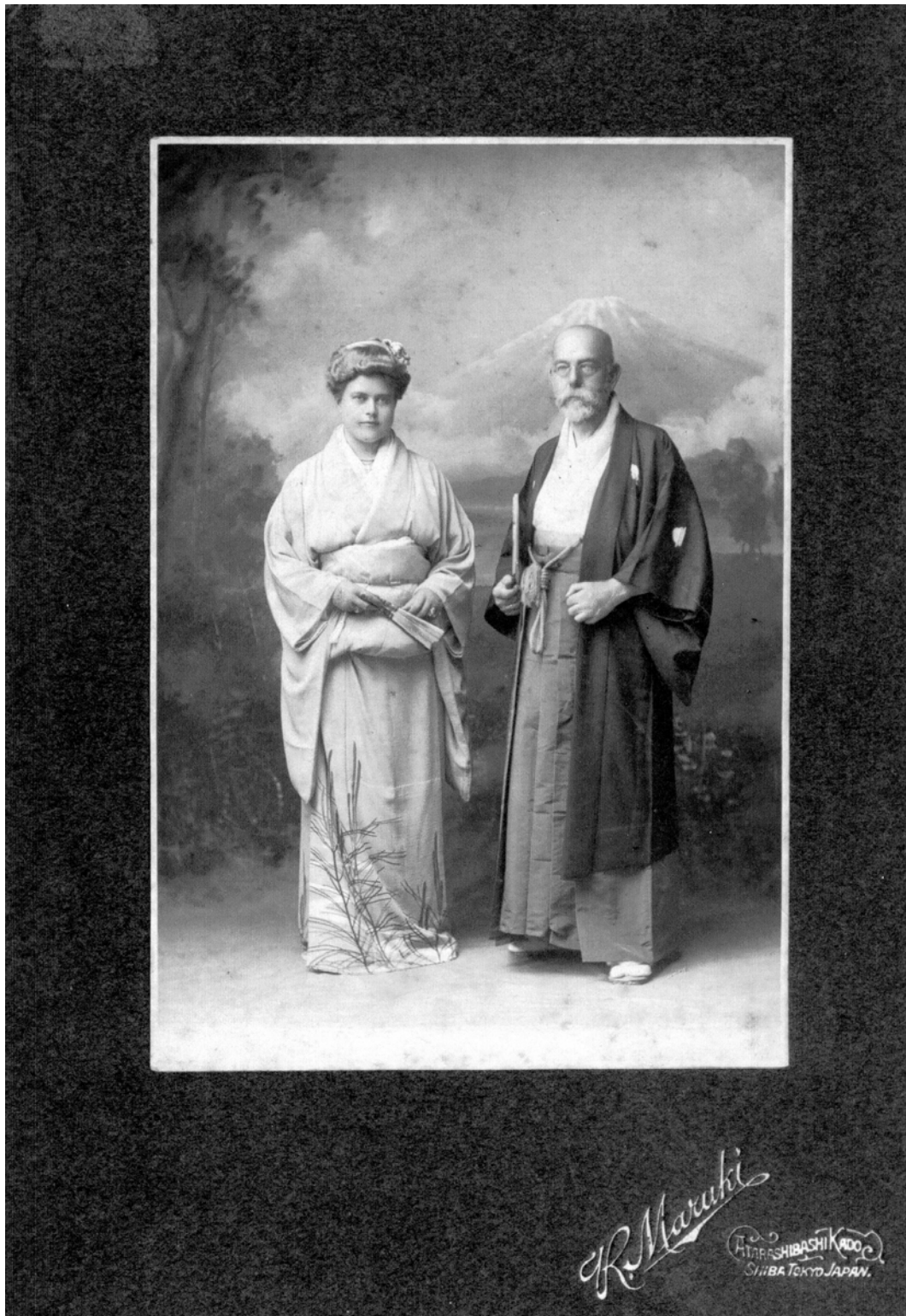


Fig. 6: Picture taken at Maruki photo studio

On the twenty-fourth, Koch had lunch with Kitasato, Nagayo, Miyajima, and Shiga at the Oriental Palace Hotel and gave a speech to express his gratitude for their kind hospitality.

There are a lot of things in Japan which are very different from what I had been led to believe before my visit. I am happy to be able to see Japan for myself. Japan is more interesting than I expected. I was very pleased by the enthusiastic welcome everywhere I went. Now that I have to part from you, my sadness makes me lost for words. Nobody could visit more places in Japan than I have in such a short time. Everywhere I have been, I have been able to witness different ways of life and have learnt a lot from people. I owe everything to you. I have greatly appreciated your earnest welcome.<sup>41</sup>

Being seen off by more than several hundred people at Yokohama Port, Koch and Hedwig boarded the “Empress of India” bound for Vancouver.

### **Aftermath of Koch’s Visit**

After the tuberculosis congress in Washington, Koch and his wife returned to Germany. A large number of gifts in commemoration of his visit to Japan were sent on by Kitasato to Berlin after their departure. A suit of armour, a sword, lacquer ware, pictures, vases, folding screens, and other souvenirs displayed in their house would remind them of their trip.<sup>42</sup> Miss Muraki Hana came to Berlin to continue serving them for about a year and a half until Koch’s sudden death in Baden-Baden on May 27, 1910.<sup>43</sup>

When Kitasato received this news, he was grief stricken. Soon he had had a small shrine at the National Institute for Infectious Diseases 国立

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41 『大阪朝日新聞』 *Ôsaka Asahi shinbun* (“Osaka Asahi Newspaper”), August 25, 1908.

42 Kitasato Shibasaburô, *Essays of Kitasato Shibasaburô* (note 2): 1292–1293.

43 Miyajima and Ishikawa, enlarged edition (note 10): 340–341; Kitasato Shibasaburô, *Essays of Kitasato Shibasaburô* (note 2): 1292.



伝染病研究所 (*Kokuritsu Densenbyô Kenkyûsho*) built in his honour, named Koch's Shrine コッホ神社 (*Kohho Jinja*). A lock of Koch's hair was rested there as a relic. The shrine escaped the conflagration of the Second World War, and continues to this day to be a site of worship at the Kitasato Institute 北里研究所 (*Kitasato Kenkyûsho*).<sup>44</sup> Furthermore a stone monument commemorating Koch's visit was built at the top of Mount Ryôzen in November 1911. It is situated in the precinct of Gokurakuji, known as an old medical service temple, which Koch had enjoyed visiting while staying in Kamakura.

Finally, one curious after-effect of the visit was caused by the publication of Koch's views on "How to Prevent Plague." Through the agency of Kitasato, his ideas on plague, tuberculosis, beriberi, and leprosy were published in the newspapers and journals read by the general public. His advice on how to prevent plague appeared in the July 21 edition of the *Tokyo Asahi Newspaper* as "Welcome Cats." Following the article, Miyajima published another article entitled "The Usefulness of Cats" in support.<sup>45</sup> Koch suggested that every house be required by law to keep a cat in order to exterminate rats, and that the police should check that the ordinance was obeyed. Soon after this publication, the demand for cats became so great that prices rose. On the twenty-ninth, an article "The Price of Cats is Rising" appeared. Cats, which had never before been a business commodity in Japan, were now changing hands for over one yen each.<sup>46</sup> The editorial of the *Osaka Asahi Newspaper* read as follows:

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44 The Kitasato Institute, *Koch-Kitasato Shrine* (brochure).

45 『東京朝日新聞』 *Tôkyô Asahi shinbun* ("Tokyo Asahi Newspaper"), July 21, 1908.

46 『岐阜毎日新聞』 *Gifu Mainichi shinbun* ("Gifu Mainichi Newspaper"), July 29, 1908. The value of one Yen at that time was about 200 U.S. dollars.

Among other things in Koch's advice, people should pay attention to the relationship between cats and plague. It is such a commonplace thing that cats catch rats that people don't think to value it. It is just like Dr. Koch to take note of such an ordinary fact. It has been characteristic of the natural world from ancient times that truth resides in commonplace things. It is difficult to say whether Koch's suggestion of cats will yield good results or not. Anyway he has exerted a great influence on the medical community and the Department of Hygiene. The Department is now undertaking a survey of the effectiveness of cats. If his suggestion can assist in developing a method for exterminating rats, it will be of great benefit to us Japanese.<sup>47</sup>

An interesting illustration entitled "The Exalted Cat" appeared in the newspaper on the day following the departure. On the picture is Koch and the proprietor of a Japanese musical instrument shop who carries a three-stringed lute (shamisen) on his shoulder. Koch holds a cat as a token of his championing their cause, as if declaring that cats are more important than shamisens (traditionally, cat skin is used in the manufacture of shamisens).<sup>48</sup>

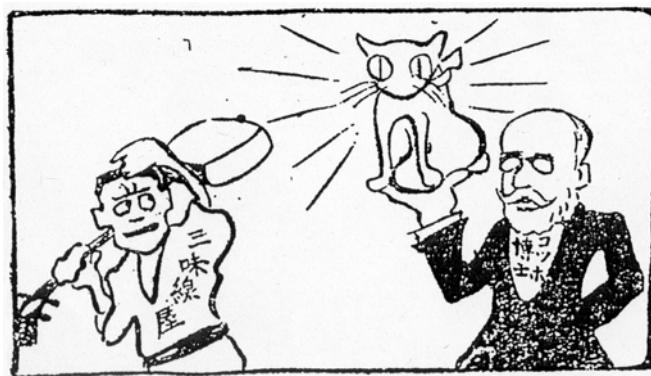


Fig. 7: "The Exalted Cat"

47 『大阪朝日新聞』 *Ôsaka Asahi shinbun* ("Osaka Asahi Newspaper"), August 13, 1908.

48 『東京毎日新聞』 *Tôkyô Mainichi shinbun* ("Tokyo Mainichi Newspaper"), August 25, 1908. A shamisen consists of two parts, a fingerboard and a soundbox. The fingerboard is made from wood. The resonating surfaces of the wooden sound box are usually made from cat skin.

## **Hedwig Visits Japan Again**

In 1912, Hedwig came to Japan once again. She arrived on May 15 at Kobe and moved to Tokyo to attend a ceremony at Koch's Shrine on the anniversary of his death on the twenty-seventh. About two months later, she came across the news of the demise of the Japanese Emperor on the thirtieth. She must have witnessed how Japanese people were grief stricken. Deeply affected, Hedwig was permitted to take part, with Mrs. Kitasato, in the procession for the funeral of the late Emperor on September 13.<sup>49</sup> That evening, Army General Nogi, a war hero, immolated himself and his wife in dedication to his dead lord, Emperor Meiji. This ritual suicide created a sensation among Japanese intellectuals and writers.

At the beginning of her first visit with Koch, Hedwig had revealed an intense interest in what made Japanese people dedicate even their lives to the Emperor. The death of General Nogi and his wife as a response to the death of the Emperor must have impressed her. In this event, she may have found the personification of loyalty and sacrifice. The following day she attended a Shinto ceremony at Koch's stone monument, and then she left Japan on September 21. Her third visit was in 1914, when she stayed for several months, mainly in Kamakura.<sup>50</sup> Her relatively frequent trips to Japan showed a deep fascination with its traditional culture.

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49     Personal communication from the Kitasato Institute.

50     Personal communication from the Kitasato Institute.



Fig. 8: Hedwig and Muraki Hana at Koch's stone monument in Kamakura

## Conclusion

Koch's visit earned him the greatest respect and admiration of both Japanese intellectuals and ordinary people, who stood at attention on railway platforms as if waiting for the Imperial train. Wherever he and his wife stayed, they were photographed with over a hundred people. These collective photographs were considered a great honour for local town doctors.

Equally impressive is Koch's strenuous schedule in pursuit of understanding the Japanese people and their culture. The attendance of Koch and Hedwig at their farewell party dressed in kimono is perhaps the most eloquent testimony to their courtesy and the depth of their sympathetic feelings. Nowadays, even Japanese women find it uncomfortable to wear a kimono for a long period in the hottest season, without the benefit of air conditioning. It must have required a lot of patience, if not endurance. Moreover, there can be little reason to doubt the warmth and appreciation of his parting speech.

A private letter of Koch to his daughter Trudy, written while he was staying in Kyoto, also bespeaks the sincerity of his feelings: "The wish I have had for a long time, of seeing Japan, is now fulfilled. For two months already I have been travelling in this wonderland and seeing new, beautiful and interesting things every day...."<sup>51</sup>

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51 Letter to Trudy, August 12, 1908 in Kyoto, the Robert Koch Archives (Bernhard Möllers, *Robert Koch*, Hannover, 1951: 350).

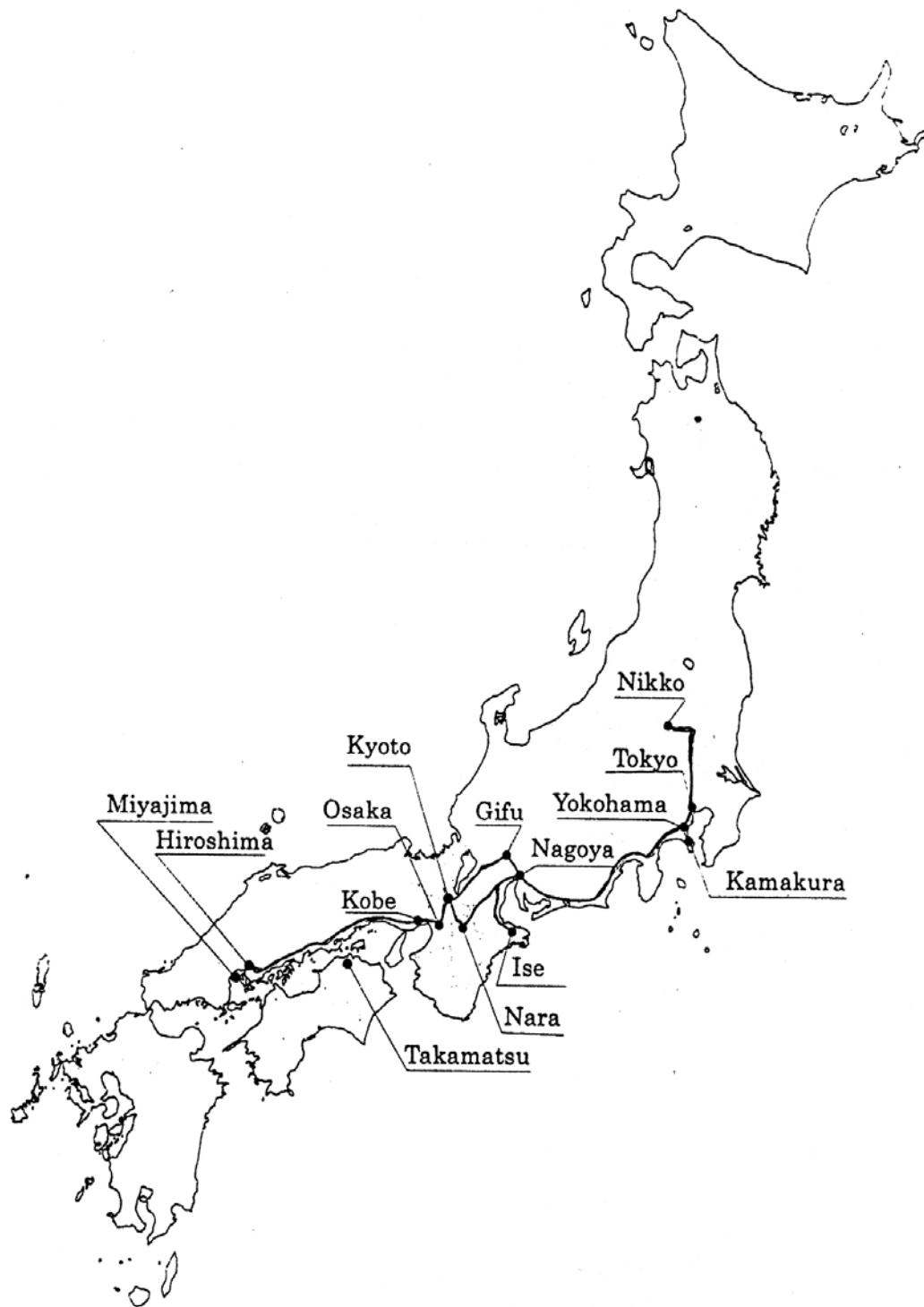


Fig. 9: Koch's Route

## Acknowledgement

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 were made available with permission of the Kitasato Institute in Tokyo, figure 5 by courtesy of the Ise Shrine. Figure 7 was reproduced from “Tokyo Mainichi Newspaper” 東京毎日新聞 (*Tôkyô Mainichi shinbun*), August 25, 1908.

Dr. Ragnhild Münch, collaborator of the Robert Koch Archives came to Japan in 2000 by invitation of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. This programme gave me the opportunity to have this enlarged version of my article published in the *Japanese Journal of the History of Biology*, no. 45, 1985. I am grateful to Dr. Münch, the Japan Society and Dr. ÔIWA Ruiko, director of the Kitasato Shibasaburô Memorial Room. Finally, I wish to thank Mr. Michael Kruse for his linguistic comments.

## The Author

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- “Uneasy Bedfellows: Science and Politics in the Refutation of Koch’s Bacterial Theory of Cholera,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 74, no. 4, 2000, pp. 671–707 (English).
- “The Mysterious Mr. Collins: Living for 140 Years in *Origin of Species*,” *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2001, pp.461–479 (English).